

## Message Text

SECRET

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53

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 INR-05 INRE-00 CIAE-00 SSO-00 SP-02 L-01 IO-03

SAM-01 SAB-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 EUR-08 /052 W

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O 081710Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2236

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T BEIRUT 0328

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

DEPT PASS DIA WASH AND USCINCEUR

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MARR LE SY

SUBJ: LEBANESE-SYRIAN CONSULTATIONS

REF: A. BEIRUT 241; B. TEL AVIV 119

SUMMARY: GOL, AT JAN 7 FRANGIEH-ASSAD MEETING, APPEARS  
ONCE AGAIN TO HAVE SIDE-STEPPED PROPOSAL FOR OVERT SYRIAN  
MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LEBANON. PRESSURES FOR SUCH INTER-  
VENTION HAVE NOT RPT NOT DISAPPEARED, HOWEVER, AND COULD  
RESURFACE IN MORE ACUTE AND IRRESISTABLE FORM IF SITUATION ON  
LEBANESE-ISRAELI BORDER CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE. END SUMMARY.

1. ACTING ON QUTHORIZATION OF FONMIN TAQLA, FONOFF DIR OF UN  
AFFAIRS HADDAD INFORMED US TODAY THAT PRES ASSAD DID RPT  
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DID PROPOSE TO PRES FRANGIEH IN THEIR JAN 7 MEETING THAT SYRIAN

FORCES BE STATIONED IN SOUTH LEBANON. ACCORDING TO HADDAD, FRANGIEH DECLINED THIS PROPOSITION AND ASSAD DID NOT RPT NOT PRESS IT. TAQLA ASKED HADDAD TO DRAW OUT ATTENTION TO THAT PORTION OF JOINT LEBANESE-SYRIAN COMMUNIQUE (FBIS BE 072031) WHICH STATES ASSAD PROCLAIMED "SYRIA'S...READINESS TO FULFILL WHATEVER LEBANON REQUESTS (RPT REQUESTS) IN ORDER TO ENABLE IT TO STAND FAST, REPEL THE AGGRESSION AND SAFEGUARD ITS SOVEREIGNTY AND THE SECURITY OF ITS SOIL." ACCORDING TO HADDAD, THIS IS ONLY REALLY SUBSTANTIVE PASSAGE IN WHOLE COMMUNIQUE, AND IT MEANS THAT GOL HAS AGAIN SUCCEEDED IN KEEPING POWER OF DECISION RE STATIONING OF FOREIGN ARAB TROOPS IN LEBANON ENTIRELY WITHIN GOL'S HANDS.

2. IN ADDITION TO FOREGOING, WE HAVE RELIABLE--BUT UNCONFIRMED--REPORT THAT FRANGIEH ASKED ASSAD TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN NUMBER OF SA'IQA FEDAYEEN NOW PRESENT IN LEBANON (PARA 3 REFTEL A) AND TO USE SARG'S INFLUENCE WITH ALL FEDAYEEN ORGANIZATIONS TO PERSUADE THEM CURTAIL OPERATIONS ALONG AND ACROSS LEBANESE-ISRAELI BORDER. FRANGIEH ALLEGEDLY BASED THIS REQUEST ON ARGUMENT THAT INCREASED FEDAYEEN PRESENCE AND LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN SOUTH LEBANON ACHIEVES NO USEFUL PURPOSE AND ONLY GIVES ISRAEL EXCUSE TO CONTINUE ITS DESTRUCTIVE RAIDS ON LEBANESE VILLAGES. ASSAD REPORTEDLY DISPLAYED "UNDERSTANDING" OF FRANGIEH'S REQUEST BUT MADE NO COMMITMENT CARRY IT OUT.

3. COMMENT: (A) ALTHOUGH PROSPECT OF OVERT SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION ON LEBANESE SOIL APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN RULED OUT FOR TIME BEING, WE REMAIN DISQUIETED BY SIGNS OF SA'IQA BUILD-UP (MOSTLY IN REMOTE RASHAYA PROVINCE NORTH OF 'ARQUOB, BUT ALSO TO SOME EXTENT IN SUTH LEBANON AND IN CAMPS AROUND BEIRUT). WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY EMBASSY TEL AVIV'S TENTATIVE ASSESSMENT (REFTEL B AND USDAO TEL AVIV 041) THAT GOI MIGHT NOT NECESSARILY REGARD SUCH DEVELOPMENT AS CAUSUS BELLI OR AS GROUNDS FOR LARGE-SCALE MILITARY OPERATION ON LEBANESE TERRITORY. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT LIKE TO THINK OF WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF--AS SEEMS ENTIRELY LIKELY FOR REASONS OUTLINED BEIRUT 15290--FEDAYEEN IN SOUTH LEBANON DECIDE TO ESCALATE THEIR "ARMED STRUGGLE" TACTICS AGAINST ISRAEL EVEN FURTHER. ALTHOUGH PRESENCE OF BOGUS "SA'IQA" UNITS IN RASHAYA HILLS CLOSE TO SYRIAN BORDER ISS PROBABLY FOR PURPOSE OF PROTECTING SYRIAN ARMY'S WESTERN FLANK AGAINST AN ISRAELI PRE-SECRET

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EMPTIVE ATTACK, THEY COULD EASILY BE DRAWN INTO ANY CONFLICT RESULTING FROM CONTINUING FEDAYEEN-ISRAELI HOSTILITIES IN SOUTH LEBANON. ENSUING CHAOS AND POLITICAL TURMOIL IN LEBANON COULD THEN FORCE GOL TO KNUCKLE UNDER TO PRESSURES FOR OVERT SYRIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION, THEREBY HEIGHTENING AREA INSTABILITY TO POINT WHERE IT MIGHT SEVERELY DAMAGE ONGOING ME SETTLEMENT EFFORT.

(B) SINCE WE HAVE REPEATEDLY SOUGHT TO POINT OUT THAT LEBANON'S

FEDAYEEN PROBLEM IS RADICALLY DIFFERENT THAN THE ONE WHICH FORMERLY EXISTED IN JORDAN, WE WERE ENCOURAGED TO NOTE DAVAR REPORT (PARA 8 REFTEL B) THAT THIS DIFFERENCE IS BEING RECOGNIZED WITHIN GOI COUNCILS. UNFORTUNATELY, LATST REEEMARKS BY ISRAELI DEFMIN PERS WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE HE DOES NOT SHARE THIS OPINION.

4. MOSLEM LEBANESE OBVIOUSLY LYRICAL OVER JAN 7 MEETING. CHRISTIANS APPEAR NEARLY AS GRATIFIED. PHALANGE LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL TODAY IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED EXTREME PLEASURE WITH YESTERDAY'S GET-TOGETHER, POINTING OUT THAT ALL LIVING EX-PRESIDENTS AND EX-PREMIERS OF LEBANON WERE PRESENT TO GREET ASSAD. HE STRESSED FACT THAT MEETING WAS ON LEBANESE TERRITORY AND THAT ATMOSPHERE WAS ONE OF GENUINE FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION. MEETING APPARENTLY WAS TOTALLY DISSIMILAR TO ONE WHICH OCCURRED OVER A DECADE AGO BETWEEN NASSER AND PES CHEHAB, WHEN LATTER FELT OBLIGED TO MEET THAT ALL-POWERFUL EGYPTIAN LEADER. GEMAYEL WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO SPEAK WELL OF ASSAD, WHHO HE SAID IS EVER LESS RADICAL AND DEVOTED NOW TO PEACE AND MODERATION.  
GODLEY

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